# MIDDLE EAST AND SOUTH ASIA REVIEW

28 MARCH 1983

## Lebanon

Israel insists that Major Sa'd Haddad command the Lebanese Army units guaranteeing security in the southern border zone, Jerusalem television reported on 27 March. Israeli Foreign Minister Yitzhaq Shamir conveyed this "uncompromising" stance to U.S. presidential envoy Philip Habib, who will present the Israeli position to the Lebanese side on his return to Beirut on 28 March. In his talks with Shamir, Habib reported that the Lebanese continue to oppose Haddad's appointment as southern army commander but that they are prepared to continue negotiations on this issue without presenting any ultimatums, the television noted. Although Lebanese sources cited by AFP disclosed earlier that Lebanon is willing to allow Israel to choose one of Haddad's seven Command Council members to head the southern security force, IDF Radio subsequently reported that Habib did not present this proposal to the Israelis. However, Habib conveyed new formulations about military cooperation to Israel indicating that if the Haddad dispute is resolved it will also be possible to reach agreement on other matters, the radio added.

After a 27 March Israeli Cabinet discussion of the Lebanon negotiations, an Israeli official affirmed that, unless progress is soon made on the Haddad question and other outstanding problems, Israel will have to review its entire position, Jerusalem radio reported. According to an IDF Radio report on the meeting, Minister Without Portfolio Ari'el Sharon criticized the current conduct of the Lebanon negotiations, entering into a sharp argument with Defense Minister Moshe Arens.

## PLO Affairs

Officials' Activities -- PLO Executive Committee Chairman Yasir 'Arafat described his 27 March talks with Saudi King Fahd ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz as important and said they discussed the work of the Arab seven-member committee, the Middle East situation, and the Palestinian issue, SPA reported. 'Arafat noted that his meeting with Jordan's King Husayn has been postponed until after Omani Sultan Qabus' visit to Amman, but added that his talks with Husayn will deal with Palestinian-Jordanian relations, according to SPA. Earlier, 'Arafat chaired a 25 March meeting of the PLO Military Council in Tunis during which the threat of a new Israeli offensive against the Palestinian forces in Lebanon's Al-Biqa' Valley was reviewed, KUNA reported. In another development PLO Political Department head Faruq Qaddumi arrived in Amman from Damascus on 27 March, Radio Monte Carlo announced.

Salah Khalaf on Jordan -- During a University of Kuwait seminar Fatah Central Committee member Salah Khalaf criticized the rapprochement between the PLO and Jordan and asked rhetorically what King Husayn could give to the Palestinians, according to the Kuwaiti paper AL-QABUS. He added that King Husayn cannot fulfill the Palestinians' demands and said he expects that the king's talks in Washington will fail. Khalaf affirmed that the Palestinians are calling for a Palestinian state and do not want a "settlement at any price."

## Jordan

Soviet, Saudi Visitors -- Foreign Minister Marwan al-Qasim met with Oleg Grinevskiy, Soviet Foreign Ministry Near East Department chief, on 26 March, Amman radio reported. Al-Qasim explained the Jordanian Government's position on the Palestinian question and stressed the need for a quick Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon. King Husayn also met with Grinevskiy, Amman television reported on 26 March. In another development well-informed sources in Amman announced that Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Sa'ud al-Faysal arrived in Jordan on 26 March with a message from King Fahd to Husayn, according to Radio Monte Carlo.

Comment on Peace Process -- Although Jordan has repeatedly stated its willingness to take the risk of entering the "diplomatic quagmire" of negotiations with Israel, Jordan must decide to "play it safe" if the PLO decides against participation in such a "doomed process," a 28 March JORDAN TIMES editorial asserted. It is unfair for the United States to ask Jordan and the PLO to give impetus to the peace process while failing to wring a single concession from Israel. It is also wrong to assume that the Jordanians and Palestinians want to participate in a process "likely to complicate rather than simplify progress...toward a comprehensive peace settlement," the paper said. It concluded by stressing the need for Jordanian-Palestinian solidarity within a unified Arab position.

## Israel

Communist-PLO Communique -- Members of the Israeli communist party, RAKAH, met with a PLO delegation headed by Executive Committee member Mahmud 'Abbas 23-24 March in Prague and the two sides discussed the question of promoting the struggle for the implementation of a just Middle East peace, ITIM announced on 27 March citing a joint communique issued by the Israeli communist party and the PLO. The two delegations expressed their desire to bolster and expand their political cooperation in order to achieve a just peace and RAKAH expressed its great appreciation for the work and resolutions of the recent PNC session in Algiers.

West Bank -- More than 300 female students from five schools in Janin were "poisoned" when a substance thought to be a certain type of nerve gas was spread on windown sills and sprayed on the curtains in the classrooms, HA'ARETZ reported on 28 March.

## Egypt

Commenting on the fourth anniversary of the signing of the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Butrus Ghali said the treaty has achieved its first goal, Israel's withdrawal from Sinai, except for Tabah, Cairo radio reported on 26 March. Ghali added that the treaty's second goal as a first step toward a comprehensive Middle East peace has not been achieved because of Israel's intransigence, its desire to annex the West Bank and Gaza, its annexation of the Golan Heights and east Jerusalem, and the invasion of Lebanon, the radio noted.

## Syria

The USSR is "closely following" Middle East developments and supports Syria in all areas, Temirbek Koshoyev, deputy chairman of the USSR Supreme Soviet Presidium, stated during a 26 March meeting with President Hafiz al-Asad reported by SANA. Al-Asad affirmed his country's strong adherence to friendship with the USSR and declared that "any attempt to undermine the friendship between Syria and the USSR is only an attempt to weaken and subjugate" Syria. The president reiterated that Syria will neither succumb to pressure or blackmail and emphasized that it will fight imperialism and Zionism with all its strength, SANA added. According to Damascus radio, Prime Minister 'Abd ar-Ra'uf al-Kasm also met with Koshoyev on 26 March, although the London paper ASH-SHARQ AL-AWSAT reported on 25 March that the prime minister was admitted to a Damascus hospital on 20 March in "extremely serious" condition due to an illness. Later, Koshoyev and People's Assembly Speaker Mahmud az-Zu'bi signed a joint statement on the talks between the two parliamentary delegations, SANA reported on 27 March. Az-Zu'bi described the joint statement as an important achievement and a step toward the consolidation of bilateral relations.

## Iraq

National Council Speaker Na'im Haddad and his delegation returned from a 7-day visit to the USSR at the invitation of the Supreme Soviet Presidium, INA reported on 25 March. Haddad described his talks with Vasiliy Kuznetsov, first deputy chairman of the Supreme Soviet Presidium, as beneficial and fruitful and pointed out that the Soviet officials expressed their "keen desire" to deepen bilateral relations. He added that Kuznetsov stressed the importance of exerting efforts to stop the Iraq-Iran war, INA noted.

## Algeria

Envoy's Moscow Visit -- A presidential envoy left Moscow on 26 March after handing a message from President Chadli Bendjedid to the Soviet Government, APS reported. The envoy met with Foreign Minister Andrey Gromyko on 25 March and discussed Middle East issues in an atmosphere of "friendship and understanding," APS added.

Relations With Libya -- A Libyan delegation led by Staff Major 'Abd as-Salam Ahmad Jallud concluded a visit to Algeria during which an agreement was signed that called for intensified efforts to unite the Steadfastness and Confrontation Front, coordinated action between Libya and Algeria in Africa and in the OAU, and continued bilateral contacts at all levels, JANA reported on 27 March. During the visit Jallud held a lengthy meeting with President Bendjedid, JANA added.

Spanish Official's Visit -- During a 22-25 March visit by Spanish Deputy Prime Minister Alfonso Guerra, the two sides affirmed that a just and peaceful solution to the Western Sahara question is based on respecting UN and OAU resolutions as well as on the Saharan people's right to self-determination, Algiers radio reported on 25 March citing a joint communique.

## Afghanistan

Soviet-Afghan troops launched a major operation in Balkh Province and Soviet tanks reportedly encircled a number of Mazar-e Sharif suburbs while Soviet gunships bombed rural areas, Karachi radio reported on 26 March. According to reports from Afghanistan, "mujahidin" attacked a convoy near Mazar-e Sharif and killed 45 Soviet-Afghan troops, the radio added.

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KARACHI CITES OFFENSIVE BY USSR-KARMAL TROOPS

BK251730 Karachi Domestic Service in English 1700 GMT 26 Mar 83

[Text] Reports from Afghanistan say the Soviet-Karmal troops have launched a major operation in Balkh Province, which lies along the Soviet border. Soviet tanks have reportedly encircled a number of suburban localities of Mazar-e Sharif, and Soviet gunship helicopters and aircraft indiscriminately bombed rural areas. According to reports, the Soviet-Karmal troops have started the operation on a massive scale following the mujahidin's attack. The reports say that the Soviet-Karmal military convoy going from Mazar-e Sharif was ambushed by the mujahidin about 13 km from it. The mujahidin attacked the tanks with rocket launchers, as a result of which five tanks were damaged, resulting in the death of about 45 Soviet-Karmal troops.

PARWAN PROVINCE GROUP JOINS GOVERNMENT

LD252131 Kabul Domestic Service in Dari 1600 GMT 25 Mar 83

[Text] A 100-man group of the Jam'it band [resistance group based in Pakistan] in Bagram District, Parwan have laid down their weapons and announced their solidarity with our toiling people in accordance with the general amnesty of the revolutionary government and in reply to the conference of leaders of armed groups who recently joined their revolutionary government.

Abdollah, the commander of this 100-man group, along with another ten representatives of the group, yesterday came to Kabul and informed the security forces of their decision to join the government.

A spokesman of the security forces reported that the representatives of this 100-man group connected with the Jami'it band are as follows:

Mohammad Mousa, Molla Mohammad, Esmatullah, Allah Mohammad, Abdol Malik, Sher Aqa, Mohammad Na'im, Mohammad Ekram, Sherin Aqa and Jajaludin.

The source added that they recalled with repulsion and profound disgust the destruction and evil deeds of the counterrevolutionary bands who, using the sacred religion, Islam, are acting against our toiling people and homeland. They have also pledged their group's cooperation for progress in the homeland and the elimination of murdering, sabateur bands.

According to another report, Mer Ali Ahmad and Sayd Ebrahim from Tangi Saydan of Lalander [region south of Kabul Province], members of the Harakat band carrying six American, Egyptian, and Pakistani weapons and 820 rounds of ammunition, have surrendered to the security authorities. Repenting their past actions, they pledged to take part in the realization of the objectives and programs of the government.

These two also expressed their disgust and repulsion for the counterrevolutionary elements.

ERSHAD SPEECH ON OCCASION OF NATIONAL DAY

BK251729 Dhaka Domestic Service in Bengali 1330 GMT 25 Mar 83

[25 March speech by Chief Martial Law Administrator Hussain Mohammad Ershad -- live; place not given]

[Excerpts] I begin in the name of God, who is merciful and compassionate. Dear countrymen: Greetings. Tomorrow is our independence day and national day. The dream we visualized 12 years ago today for the creation of a beautiful and solvent social life by freeing ourselves from the agony of dependency, exploitation and deception and developing fully our national pride, language, tradition and culture received its formal shape only on this day. On this memorable occasion of the nation's life, please accept my and my government's sincere good wishes and congratulations.

On this auspicious occasion I recall with great respect those known and unknown immortal sons whose extreme sacrifice brought about long cherished independence and sovereignty. They did not hesitate to sacrifice their lives for the interest of the people and the nation, and I pray for the salvation of their souls.

We have crossed a decade as an independent and sovereign nation. It may not be very long for a nation's life, but for an independent state, especially for this nation, which had to win freedom through long movements, the people's struggle and finally through a bloody war, 12 years are not at all negligible.

Dear countrymen: It is a fact that we have acquired our political freedom (?through blood), but we have not yet achieved our economic emanicpation. The dream of an exploitationless society, where common people and working people can live happily, prosperously and without any worries is still beyond our reach. The present government, after taking the responsibility about a year ago today, has exerted all its efforts to the objective of achieving that economic emancipation. It is an undeniable fact that to depend on another's aid is contrary to the basic principles of independence and sovereignty. Thus, we have started our struggle for economic self-reliance with the purpose of bringing to the people the fruits of this freedom won after a great sacrifice of blood. This struggle not only belongs to the government, it is a struggle for the existence of the 90 million people of Bangladesh. I firmly believe that in this auspicious moment of the national life everyone will actively participate without any discrimination in the life and death struggle which has been started with the objective of improving the nation's destiny.

I have already stated the government's plan of action, but its repetition today seems to be relevant. I bring to your attention once again the important aspects of our plan.

Our first and foremost task is to bring to the people the fruits of political independence through economic emancipation. With this objective in mind along with the augmentation of national wealth and income, we have to narrow the gap gradually between the rich and the poor through a just and proper distribution of wealth. On this basis, rural-oriented development work should be intensified to bring prosperity to a (?large section) of the people. About 90 percent of our people in the country live in the villages; therefore, rural development is the backbone of national progress. If the nation has to be freed from poverty, exploitation and want, the government will have to save 68,000 villages. Thus, we are striving for realistic rural-oriented development work. The (?district) and police station administrators are presently the principal instruments for the implementation of these rural development programs.

One of the main objectives of our plan is to increase agricultural production and attain self-sufficiency in food and at the same time to provide a guarantee of livelihood to the farmers and make necessary land reforms with the purpose of bringing prestige to their profession. There is a need for the reorganization of the land system for the purpose of maintaining the production tempo offood grains. In order to revitalize the rural economy, 64 branches of rural banks have already been opened. [passage indistinct]

The plan we have adopted to increase industrial production includes respect for labor, a guarantee of employment to workers, improvement of efficiency of workers through training facilities and importance to the cooperative system in industries. Priority in the industrial field has been given to export-oriented industries, cottage and village industries and [word indistinct] industry. Besides this, the plan provides encouragement and facilities to develop industries in the (?public) sector, to allow capital investments through fuller exploitation of private initiatives and efficiency and to create a competitive atmosphere in the distribution of industrial goods.

Our main objective is to make the administrative and judiciary system (?progressive), economical and people-oriented. VArious elements of this program are: to observe austerity in administrative expenses; to take the administration to the public through decentralization; and to hand over the responsibility of running the affairs of the administration to the people's representatives.

In the field of the judiciary, efforts should be made, through decentralization and systematic reforms, to reduce harassment of the public and to speed up judicial work.

Another important objective of our plan is to bring health facilities to the doorsteps of the people and effectively check the population explosion. All-out efforts are being made to implement the birth control program on a priority basis. Improvement in the educational system is very essential for the eradication of illiteracy and for providing jobs to the unemployed people. The objective of our plan is to make the education [word indistinct] and employment-oriented so it can guarantee future employment for our student community.

About half our population are women. Therefore, one of our objectives is to utilize them effectively in our economic and social programs. We have to decide their proportional representation in jobs and implement it within a specified time limit. We have expressed our resolve to establish the due position of women in society through their large-scale participation side by side with men in our national development plan.

Eradication of corruption is our primary declared policy. We have declared a holy war against it. However, giving [word indistinct] punishment is not the only way to get rid of this black disease. On the contrary, the amendment of rules, widening of (?honest thinking) and speedy inquiry can bring an end to it.

It is very necessary for the progress of the nation to reflect its tradition, principles and (?greatness) in all (?aspects) of its national plan. With this purpose in mind, service to our language and culture and their careful development have become an inseparable part of our plan. We are determined to respect and honor our tradition. We are also resolved [words indistinct] to implement this vigorously in our social life.

The objective of our politics is to bring an end to the agitational and conspiratorial politics and to introduce constructive and independent politics.

We want real democracy for the people where the hopes and aspirations of the common people get expression and where there will always be patience in the political field.

Dear countrymen: One year is not enough to evaluate the achievement of any government existing in an underdeveloped country such as Bangladesh. However, I want to state in this connection that our primary responsibility was to combat a (?sinking) economy and put a check on the deteriorating law and order situation. I have mentioned earlier that in the sphere of economic development we faced many difficulties. [passage indistinct]

We are making all possible efforts to revive the local economy. We have handed over many industrial units to the private sector with the objective of starting healthy competition. Our main objective is to attain economic progress with full private industrial and technological growth. We have entered the struggle of self-reliance by crossing the boundaries of economic dependency. It has taken a long time to transcend the grave economic stagnation of the country and to introduce a new economic system. The good results of our efforts have already started to show.

Great strides have been noticed in our exports, and they are now very satisfactory. Where in the first 8 months of the last fiscal year exports were 8.2 billion taka, they have increased to 10.16 billion taka during the same period this year. We are firmly progressing in our efforts to explore internal resources. As it took considerable time to tide over the economic depression, it was not yet possible to fully meet the hardware needs of the industries.

In the (?8) months of the current fiscal year the total revenue receipt was 12.57 billion taka, which was about 81 million taka more than last year.

The reorganization of the commercial banks has not yet been completed. However, they have overcome extreme disorder and several other difficulties. In the first 8 months of this year the rate of reserves has been increased by 9 percent. It was only 1.8 percent last year. During the same period, credit to the private sector was increased by 20 percent, which was only 15 percent last year. Bank rates of (?nationalized) banks have been reduced. The public sector's industries and business organizations are studying the trends of sale of their stocks, and this has reduced the burden of their loss and, in many cases, their loans.

By taking apparently hard and in many cases (?firm) decisions and strictly implementing them we have brought favorable conditions and progressive trends to the economy. We have rejected all unnecessary projects, completed the work of hopeful ones, directly increased investments in development work and made ardent efforts to stop useless expenses. Conforming with the efforts to quickly increase production of [word indistinct], we have increased the purchase price. To implement the development program we have taken steps to decentralize and establish partnerships with enthusiastic groups. Steps have also been taken to increase capital investment in [words indistinct]. We have refrained from increasing expenses and foreign loans and ruining the future of our posterity. We have not created a false [words indistinct] by introducing a deficit budget or printing currency.

In the first 6 months of the current fiscal year the [word indistinct] has increased by 8 percent compared to last year. [Passage indistinct] It is hoped that inflation will remain between 10-12 percent this year.

We are making vigorous efforts to introduce modern means for increasing agricultural production. Despite the rise in the prices of agricultural equipment, in the first 8 months of the current fiscal year [words indistinct].

Despite severe drought last year, our farmers were able to produce more than 70 million tons of amon [autumn] paddy. The first report on [word indistinct] and wheat cultivation this year is very hopeful. We are expecting 3.5 million tons of boro [spring] paddy this year. Compared to last year the rise in the production of wheat will be about 150,000-200,000 tons. The food grain production of Bangladesh will hit a record figure this year. It is believed to be 15.1 million tons.

We have taken steps to combat [words indistinct]. Besides that, the production of mustard seeds, potatoes and vegetables have been largely increased; therefore, we are thinking of exporting vegetables and [words indistinct]. The government is actively considering providing impetus to the farmers.

The food situation at present is satisfactory and is fully controlled by the government. It is as evident as daylight that a big gap exists between the rich and poor in society. The people of rural Bengal have been neglected to the extreme. Therefore, we firmly believe that in order to save the millions of people in Bangladesh, we have to hand over completely the overall responsibility of the police station and district-level administration to the representatives of the people. If the responsibility of the development plans of the police stations and district-level administrations and their implementation are not given to the elected representatives, the good fruits of these programs cannot reach the people in the rural areas. We are trying to create a situation where only educated, honest, and hardworking people should be interested in election to the police station council. It will then be considered beneficial to the people and nation. We remain steadfast toward this objective and are working without any selfish interest. There is no other alternative if we are to set up democracy on a strong foundation.

We believe in a democratic system. The people's verdict will be considered final, and we have unflinching faith in it. God willing, all these elections will start through the casting of votes about this December, and necessary orders have been issued to take steps in this direction. If the elections to the police station and district level are held in a free and fair manner, a basic framework of a real democracy is bound to set in. This will bring in (?fairness) in future national politics, and development work will be maintained at the police station and district level.

Dear countrymen: We all know that the student community is our national future helmsman. Therefore, we are determined to restore a healthy and clean atmosphere in the educational institutions. Everyone desires that the students should get themselves in studies under necessary available facilities and opportunities. It is hoped that at the proposed political negotiations various parties will say [words indistinct] on the student community and will help in determining its role.

Dear countrymen: We have to realize today that perseverance, tolerance and a feeling of respect toward leaders with contradictory ideologies are indispensable for the establishment of real democracy. Political instability is not at all beneficial for the country and the nation. It creates chaos, violence, corruption and invites unlimited misery for the common people. We would like to bring an end to these with the cooperation of all.

Now I would like to say something about the negotiations with politicians and the coming national election. At the outset, I appeal to all, irrespective of parties and ideologies, to maintain a peaceful atmosphere. The most important question today is the development of the law and order situation and to create a congenial atmosphere for a political dialogue. Everybody is aware of this need. We are committed to healthy democracy and to a return of the basic rights of the people.

Therefore, the present government has already expressed eagerness for political dialogue. [Passage indistinct] I believe that through negotiations, it is possible to evolve safeguards to ensure the continuous functioning of an elected government for [word indistinct] period [words indistinct]. Keeping the larger interest of the country in view, if we succeed in displaying an attitude of magnanimity and tolerance, then it should not be very difficult to arrive at our destination.

Dear countrymen: On 24 March last year, I promised to return real democracy and the basic rights of the people. We have proposed in this regard to hold negotiations with all political leaders in order to come to an agreement on various issues. We want to discuss the views of all, irrespective of parties and ideologies, with equal importance. We will present the guidelines to you that may be formulated as a result of these negotiations. The people's verdict is always supreme and, according to democracy, it isthe only right path.

Before I conclude, I would like to say something about our practical foreign policy. Recently, I attended the nonaligned summit held in Delhi. I had discussions there with various heads of government and state of the world on bilateral, regional and international matters. I have particularly noted that at various international levels our role was not only commended but that there was a considerable rise in interest in an attitude of cooperation toward us. As the chairman of the Group of 77, Bangladesh this time has been able to play a powerful role at the nonaligned summit. Besides this, you must have seen in the newspapers Bangladesh's significant contributions to this important conference of heads of state and government. You also have come to know the increasing importance of Bangladesh in the Islamic world. In Delhi recently, Bangladesh was included as a member of the peace mission to maintain mutual contact in a bid to end the fratricidal war between Iran and Iraq. Besides this, Bangladesh was also included in the seven-member committee for the implementation of an Arab peace plan for a peaceful solution to the Palestinian and Middle East issues. All these reflect the success of our practical foreign policy. Bangladesh firmly believes in peace because we believe that a peaceful situation is an essential precondition for economic and social progress. Bangladesh remains firmly committed to the policy of establishing friendly relations with all nations of the world, especially with its neighbors. We categorically believe that sovereignty, respect for territorial integrity and noninterference in each other's affairs are the basic guidelines that should determine mutual behavior in the international sphere. Thus, we have repeatedly asked for the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of foreign troops from Afghanistan and Kampuchea so the people of those countries can decide their destiny independently without foreign interference. Bangladesh will continue to extend its unflinching support to the Democratic Government of Kampuchea led by Prince Sihanouk.

Dear countrymen: I have tried to draw a picture for you of the programs, objectives, targets and the implementation of the targets of the present government. I appeal to you: Come, let all the citizens join the the ardent efforts of rightful reflection of political independence in the economic sphere, which is an integral part of the golden dream of 26 March. Only in this way will we be able to establish our planned new Bangladesh. Only then will economic emancipation come to the people of Bangladesh along with uninterrupted progress in all fields. May the great mericiful God give us the courage to attain that spirit and strength. Amen! May God take care of you. Long live Bangladesh!

RASGOTRA REJECTS PRC SOVEREIGNTY CLAIM

BK271350 Delhi Domestic Service in English 1330 GMT 27 Mar 83

[Text] India has rejected the Chinese claim of sovereignty over certain parts of Arunachal Pradesh. Speaking to newsmen at Calcutta airport, the foreign secretary, Mr Rasgotra, said we have made our stand quite clear many a time earlier and the areas claimed by China are very much ours. Mr Rasgotra was on his way to Dhaka to attend the seven-nations conference beginning tomorrow.

About progress in the improvement of India's relations with Pakistan, Mr Rasgotra said that the meeting of the newly formed joint commission of the two countries is scheduled to be held next June. The meeting will be another step in this direction. He said further discussion on the treaty for the no-war pact proposal between the two countries could be taken up [words indistinct]. Regarding President Zia's reported statement on Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, the foreign secretary said the Prime Minister Mrs Gandhi had already clarified the position.

Commenting on the recently concluded Seventh Nonaligned Nations Conference in Delhi, Mr Rasgotra said the Nonaligned Movement has become more stronger and the outcome of the conference was positive.

Replying to a question, the foreign secretary said that the seven-nations conference on mutual cooperation will discuss, amongst other things, agriculture, telecommunication, health and technology. The seven countries participating in the conference are Pakistan, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Burma, Sri Lanka, besides India.

MANEKA GANDHI FORMS NEW POLITICAL PARTY

BK261605 Delhi Domestic Service in English 1530 GMT 26 Mar 83

[Text] A new party called the Rashtriya Sanjay Manch has been formed. Announcing this in New Delhi today, Mrs Maneka Gandhi told newsmen that the convention of the party is slated for the 3rd of next month when the office bearers will be announced.

Discusses Formation

BK260851 Hong Kong AFP in English 0829 GMT 26 Mar 83

[By Dilip Ganguly]

[Excerpt] New Delhi, March 26 (AFP) -- Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's rebel daughter-in-law Maneka Gandhi today announced formation of an 800,000-member-strong political party to challenge the authority of her 66-year-old mother-in-law.

"My party is neither left nor right, it is youth-oriented and we are going to contest the coming general elections," said the 27-year-old former model turned journalist turned politician.

Maneka, widow of Mrs. Gandhi's son Sanjay who was killed in a 1980 plane crash, told a press conference that 800,000 members had already been enrolled and the figure would cross the one million mark "within a few months."

A smiling Maneka, showing the same composure of her mother-in-law, answered a volley of questions and said that Mrs. Gandhi's Congress (I) Party now had reasons to be worried.

"I am sure that she (Mrs. Gandhi) will now advance the elections, (originally scheduled for 1985) and it will be held later this year. We are going to give them a tough time," she said.

"I am happy that so many people have come up to support our party and I am sure our programme and policies will attract more young members."

She said her party was named after her late husband and the English translation stands as "National Forum of Sanjay."

Maneka accused Mrs. Gandhi's administration of harassment and said her telephones were still being tapped, mail opened and she was being followed everywhere by intelligence agents.

She said she was the chairman of the new party and the detailed list of its constitution and officers would be announced at the first national convention scheduled to be held here on April 3.

The objective of the party will be "establishment of a socialist secular state and a true democracy" and its top priority will be employment, Maneka said.

She said she would not join hands with other opposition political parties as a "rule," but there could be "cooperation on specific programmes."

"We have taken the good things from the left and right, but my party is a true centrist in all senses," she said.

Maneka said she had started with one member of parliament and seven legislators in Indian provinces, who defected from the Congress (I) and joined hands with her. "But I am sure to make a good impact at the coming elections," she said.

She said she differed with the policies of the Congress (I) and said mishandling by Mrs. Gandhi of the situation in Punjab, where militant Sikhs are seeking autonomy, might lead to an "Assam type situation there."

She was referring to the bloodshed in the northeast state of Assam where anti-immigrant protests touched off violence that left thousands dead.

Maneka, who comes from a rich Sikh family, said she supported some of the demands of the Sikhs, but refused to be pinned down on whether she favoured total political autonomy for Punjab.

ASSAM GOVERNOR NOTES IMPROVEMENT IN SITUATION

BK270939 Delhi Domestic Service in English 0240 GMT 27 Mar 83

[Text] The Assam governor, Mr Prakash Mehrotra, has said that the situation has improved in the state. Talking to newsmen in Aijol, he said that the most important task before the government is to create confidence among the people and to make them feel secure. The government, he said, is taking all steps to bring back those who had crossed over to West Bengal and Aronachal Pradesh. He denied that large-scale infiltration of foreigners into the state is still on. He said the people are now more aware than before of the issue and, therefore, it will be very difficult for any new entrants to stay even in the villages without their knowledge.

Reports from Gauhati say the state continues to remain clam. The Army and paramilitary personnel are carrying out combing operations and have recovered a sizeable quantity of explosives and lethal weapons from different parts of the state.

Replying to a discussion in the state assembly on the supplementary demands fo a grant for police force, the chief minister, Mr Hiteshwar Saikia, said the government has full confidence in the state police force. The chief minister stressed the need for reorganization of police force with mordern training.

CONGRESS-S IN WEST BENGAL MERGES WITH CONGRESS-I

BK261217 Delhi Domestic Service in English 0830 GMT 26 Mar 83

[Text] The West Bengal unit of the Congress-S has merged with the Congress-I. This was announced by the Congress-I working president, Mr Kamlapati Tripathi, in New Delhi today. In a statement he welcomed the decision of the state Congress-S headed by Mr Priya Ranjan Das Munshi. All the members of the state Congress-S have been admitted to the Congress-I.

Releasing Mr Tripathi's statement to the press, the All India Congress Committee-I general secretary, Mr C.M. Stephen, said the merger is significant as it would help polarization of political forces in the state.

Some state Congress-I leaders, including its president, Mr Das Munshi, were present when Mr Stephen released the statement to the press.

Commenting on the merger, Mr Das Munshi said national unity can be safeguarded only by the Indian National Congress under the leadership of Mrs Gandhi.

Simultaneously with this the West Bengal Pradesh [state] Youth Congress and Chhatra Parished [Students Council] announced their decision to follow the Congress-I ideology to strengthen the youth movement in the state. The Congress-I general secretary, Mr Rajiv Gandhi, welcomed the decisions taken by the two youth organizations.

GANDHI, SINGH GREET BANGLADESH COUNTERPARTS

BK261243 Delhi Domestic Service in English 0240 GMT 26 Mar 83

[Text] Bangladesh is celebrating its independence day today. On this occasion the president and the prime minister have felicitated the Bangladesh president, Mr Fazal Assanuddin Chowdhury, and the chief martial law administrator, Lieutenant General Ershad. In his message Giani Zail Singh has expressed the hope that mutual cooperation between the two countries will be strengthened.

Mrs Gandhi in her message said that India and Bangladesh will work together for peace and stability in the world.

KARACHI CURFEW TOTALLY LIFTED 28 MAR

BK280307 Karachi Domestic Service in Urdu 0200 GMT 28 Mar 83

[Text] A press note issued by the Karachi administration says that in view of the situation returning to normalcy the curfew has been totally lifted from 0500 today.

ZIA ANNOUNCES LIFTING OF CENSORSHIP ON WEEKLIES

BK280419 Karachi Domestic Service in Urdu 0200 GMT 28 Mar 83

[Text] President General Mohammad Ziaul Haq has stressed upon the newspapers to cooperate with government in purging the society of all social and moral evils and in assuming responsibility. Speaking at the annual award giving ceremony of the All Pakistan Newspapers Society [APNS] in Karachi last night, he said officials in the government were trying to reform the society through the best of their ability. They had chosen a course and were following it steadily without any fear of criticism because this course would lead the nation to a better future. The president said that the press is free to criticize the shortcomings of the government without any fear but the criticism must not be just for the sake of criticism. He said the press could not have the right to criticize the government without making itself accountable before the people. The president said he had always made a distinction between the state and the government and had never taken notice of attack on his person or his family. The government had never used advertisement as a lever against the press and had no intention of doing so in the future.

The president announced the lifting of censorship on weekly newspaper [words indistinct] except those in Karachi where the provincial government has currently enforced precensorship because of sectarian disturbances. He also promised full cooperation and financial assistance in the setting up of the proposed press institute. Earlier, the president of the society, (Majiod Nizami), in his address of welcome, promised that the society would continue to maintain the tradition of healthy, free, and constructive journalism. He stressed on the freedom of press and said it should be in accordance with the country's integrity, solidarity, and its Islamic ideology.

The president gave away eight APNS awards for the best reporters in English, Urdu, and regional languages, feature writers, columnists, cartoonists, and the best photographers. He also gave away awards to advertisement firms.

BENAZIA BHUTTO SPEAKS ON RIGHT TO DISSENT

BK261554 Hong Kong AFP in English 1544 GMT 26 Mar 83

[Text] Karachi, March 26 (AFP) -- Benazir Bhutto, daughter of executed former Prime Minister Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, today defended the right to dissent when she appeared as a defence witness in a sedition trial before a military court here.

Miss Bhutto, 30, a leading figure of the opposition who has been detained by the martial law authorities for the past two years, was called as a defence witness in the sedition trial of six communists.

Miss Bhutto's lawyer said she stressed that there was no scope for martial law in an Islamic society and strongly defended the right to dissent.

"Each individual is entitled to his own views and should not be prosecuted simply because the ruling authority is at variance with those views, particularly when the ruling authority does not have a popular mandate," she reportedly said.

She is due to reappear before the military court when it resumes the hearing Tuesday.

'MODERATE' EARTHQUAKE RECORDED IN PESHAWAR

BK261020 Karachi Domestic Service in English 1005 GMT 26 Mar 83

[Text] An earthquake of moderate intensity was recorded in Peshawar by the seismological network of Pakistan's meteorological department at 1541 yesterday. According to the local upper atmospheric research station, its epicenter lay about 1,000 km southwest of Peshawar in Baluchistan. The magnitude of the earthquake on the international richter scale was 5.1.

REPORTAGE ON ITALIAN FOREIGN MINISTER'S VISIT

Arrives 26 Mar

BK261635 Karachi Domestic Service in Urdu 1500 GMT 26 Mar 83

[Text] Italian Foreign Minister Emilio Colombo arrived in Islamabad this afternoon on a 2-day official visit to Pakistan. He was received at the airport among others by Foreign Minister Sahabzada Yaqub Khan and ambassadors of the EEC member nations. Shortly after Colombo's arrival in Islamabad, the two foreign ministers held talks in the foreign office in Islamabad. They discussed international issues, especially the Afghanistan problem, and matters of mutual interest. They specifically reviewed bilateral relations, particularly the issue of further strengthening economic cooperation.

Earlier, upon his arrival in Islamabad, Colombo said talks in Islamabad will touch upon facts and crises which are international in nature. He said relations between the two countries are good and expressed the hope that their talks will further increase economic cooperation between Pakistan and Italy.

Concerning Afghan refugees, the Italian foreign minister said that Italy was earlier provided assistance under the framework of cooperation and collaboration between the two countries and it will continue to do so in the future because the Afghan refugee problem is associated not only with Pakistan but with the entire international community.

Meets With Zia

BK270546 Karachi Domestic Service in English 1700 GMT 26 Mar 83

[Text] The Italian foreign minister, Mr Emilio Colombo, called on President General Mohammad Ziaul Haq in Rawalpindi this evening. He discussed with the president matters of mutual interest. Foreign Minister Sahabzada Yaqub Khan was also present on the occasion.

Yaqub Khan Gives Dinner

BK271325 Karachi Domestic Service in Urdu 0200 GMT 27 Mar 83

[Text] Foreign Minister Sahabzada Yaqub Khan has once again expressed Pakistan's desire for a political settlement of the Afghanistan problem which can ensure return of the Afghan refugees to their homes with honor and dignity and restore the right of the Afghan people to form a government of their own choice.

He said this at a dinner he hosted last night in honor of the Italian foreign minister, Emilio Colombo. He also referred to the heavy burden Pakistan has to bear as result of the influx of Afghan refugees. Regarding his talks with the Italian foreign minister, he described them as extremely useful. He said Pakistan and Italy have had very close and friendly relations over the past few years and these relations are based on the development of mutually beneficial cooperation in political, economic, cultural, and other fields. The Italian engineers and technical experts have played a significant role in the construction of Tarbela dam in Pakistan.

The Italian foreign minister said in his speech that his country fully supports the efforts of the United Nations toward a political settlement of Afghanistan problem. He appreciated Pakistan's efforts toward a peaceful solution of this problem. He also lauded Pakistan's role in shouldering the burden of large number of Afghan refugees.

Concerning Pakistan-Indian relations, Colombo said the recent agreement on the establishment of the joint ministerial commission between the two countries will greatly help in the creation of an atmosphere of mutual confidence. Concerning his talks with Sahabzada Yaqub Khan, Colombo said they will be of immense help in further increasing cooperation between the two countries.

## Colombo Visits Refugee Village

BK271330 Karachi Domestic Service in English 1005 GMT 27 Mar 83

[Text] The visiting Italian foreign minister, Mr Emilio Colombo, has emphasized that the Afghan refugees problem was not the concern of Afghanistan and Pakistan alone but of all the countries which believe in the right of sovereignty of each country and international order based on respect for independence and human rights. He was talking to the Afghan refugees during his visit to a tented village at Nasirbagh near Peshawar this morning. He reiterated the stand of the Italian Government for a negotiated solution of the Afghanistan problem based on withdrawal of foreign troops from that country, restoration of nonaligned and independent status of Afghanistan and the right of Afghan people to determine their own future. He said Italy was aware of the sufferings of Afghan refugees and would continue to provide humanitarian assistance and moral support to them.

## NEPAL

### PRC PEOPLE'S CONGRESS DELEGATION ARRIVES

BK231617 Hong Kong AFP in English 1327 GMT 23 Mar 83

[Text] Katmandu, March 23 (AFP) -- The vice chairman of China's National People's Congress (NPC) Standing Committee, Ngapoi Ngawang Jigme, arrived here today at the head of a 10-member delegation for talks with Nepalese leaders and a tour of Chinese-aided development projects.

He was met on arrival by Gopal Chand Rajbanshi, vice chairman of Nepal's national Panchayat (parliament) and other senior officials of the Nepalese Foreign Ministry.

During his stay, he is also to call on King Birendra and to meet Prime Minister Surya Bahadur Thapa and Foreign Minister Padma Bahadur Khatri separately tomorrow.

The NPC delegation will also tour various Chinese-aided projects across the country, an official source stated.

## SRI LANKA

### TERRORIST ACTIVITY REPORTEDLY INCREASING IN EAST

BK261434 Colombo WEEKEND in English 20 Mar 83 p 1

[From Ranil Weerasinghe in Trincomalee]

[Text] Attention is now being focused on the east as the new staging and training area of the northern terrorist organizations.

Defence Ministry sources claimed that the terrorist build up in the area was linked to a well organized operation by a social service organization to provide incentive payments and settle large numbers of families of Indian origin on crown land in the Trincomalee District.

An immediate report has been called for by the Defence Ministry on the exact number of families that have been illegally settled -- significantly enough, along the very borders of what is being spoken of as the proposed state of Eelam.

Leads into this new development were uncovered following investigations into the ambush of an Army truck by terrorists at Umayalpuram in Jaffna early this month.

More details regarding this were uncovered after CID [Criminal Investigation Department] and Army units arrested in Trincomalee a suspect whose name and address had been left behind in the getaway van which the terrorists had been compelled to abandon with a quantity of ammunition, uniforms and medical equipment.

Intelligence officers who interrogated the suspect had learnt that he had given the address to another youth who had approached him regarding the concealment of several weapons belonging to the terrorists.

The second suspect and another youth who was said to have had the weapons in his possession are absconding. One of them had previously come to the attention of the police after he had set fire to the national flag.

The police who are continuing the investigation last week recovered a letter written by one of the youth stating that he was proceeding to Jaffna on a 'dangerous mission'. The date given in the letter coincided with that of the attack on the Army truck.

WEEKEND learns that following a detailed report submitted to the Defence Ministry security in all stations particularly at Kuchchavelly, the northernmost station in the Trincomalee District has been intensified. The Air Force and the Navy which have two key bases in Trincomalee too have been alerted to prepare contingency plans to deal with any acts of terrorism in the area.

ARMED FORCES JOINT STAFF ISSUES COMMUNIQUES

Communique No 1,259

LD251742 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1630 GMT 25 Mar 83

[Communique No 1,259 of Joint Staff of Armed Forces of Islamic Republic of Iran]

[Text] In His exalted name. Yesterday, the powerful and selfless combatants of Islam continued their defense of the fronts in western parts of the country. They discovered and defused a minefield planted by the Iraqi Ba'thist mercenaries, repeatedly opened artillery and heavy-weapons fire on enemy positions and strongholds and destroyed two ammunition trucks and several individual and collectives entrenchments, killing the respective personnel. Our forces a checked the troop movements and activities of the aggressive Iraqi Ba'thist forces, preventing them from making any moves or carrying out any operations, and silencing their fire. On one of the Western fronts, the artillery of the ground forces opened fire on any enemy motor pool, inflicting considerable damage on the vehicles belonging to the Saddamists.

On southern fronts, exchanges of fire continued sporadically between Islam's powerful forces and that of the aggressive Saddamists. The selfless forces of Islam's artillery fire disrupted the engineering operations of the Iraqi forces, stopped the advance of any enemy patrol unit intending to infilterate the defensive positions of our combatants, and pushed back the aggressive Saddamist mercenaries. On these fronts, the self-sacrificing forces of Islam continued to carry out their patrol missions and deal blows on infidel Saddamist forces. On the Abadan fronts, the forces of Islam and the Gendarmerie warriors opened fire on positions, units and military machinery of the Saddamist mercenaries, silencing enemy fire and precenting their troops movements. They succeeded in destroying an engineering vehicle and more than eight heavy- and light-weapon emplacements and Saddamist observation posts. The city of Abadan came under artillery fire by the aggressive Ba'thist mercenaries yesterday; some damages were sustained. During the past 24 hours, the self-sacrificing pilots of the Air Force and the units of the antiaircraft defense of the Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran carried out tactical moves and executed defensive fire, preventing the aggressive Iraqi planes from violating the airspace of the southern and western border towns of the country.

[Signed] The Joint Staff of the Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran

Communique No 1,260

LD261850 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1630 GMT 26 Mar 83

[Communique No 1,260 of Joint Staff of Armed Forces of Islamic Republic of Iran]

[Text] In His exalted name. Our virtuous and patient combatants unremittingly continue their holy battle. In the last 24 hours exchange of artillery and mortar fire in the western sector continued on various battlefronts, with our heroic forces maintaining their superiority, consolidating their positions and firing on the enemy's troop concentration and supply lines, thus halting Iraq's ground activities, the search and mopping-up operations continued as before on some western fronts. Moreover, our fire destroyed one enemy tank, three personnel carriers and several foxholes.

Exchanges of fire continued in the (Shuro Shirin) sector, with our combatants setting on fire three enemy trenches with their personnel.

In the Marian sector the Islamic forces opened fire on enemy positions near (Binawah Sutah) and Sheykhan, inflicting casualties and damage on the Saddamist forces.

In the southern operational sector exchanges of heavy artillery fire continued, and our fighting units dealing incessant blows to the declining enemy body with artillery fire thwarted its movements. They also kept under observation any movement in the region through their reconnaissance, operational and infiltrating missions.

Exchanges of fire also continued in (Fakkeh) and Zobeydeh, although it was more intense than in other areas in the southern sector. In the Abadan and Khorramshahr operational region the Islamic forces fired on the enemy's positions and defensive lines on the other side of the Arvand Rud, disrupted Iraq's engineering operations, controlled the Al-Faw-Basra supply line and prevented the enemy's vehicles from moving.

In the last 24 hours the Islamic Air Force's self-sacrificing pilots preserved the safety of the homeland's airspace and foiled enemy air attacks. Our air defense units also succeeded in preventing air raids planned by the enemy.

[Signed] Joint Staff of the Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran

Communique No 1,261

LD271800 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1630 GMT 27 Mar 83

[Communique No 1,261 of Joint Staff of Armed Forces of Islamic Republic of Iran]

[Text] In His exalted name. The conditions on the fronts of the imposed war are hereby brought to the attention of our dear compatriots. At 2345 on 25 March a number of Iraqi patrol groups attempting to approach our forces' defensive lines in the (Sharhani) sector were forced to flee after suffering losses and casualties resulting from the fire by the self-sacrificing and ever-wakeful combatants of Islam.

On the Abadan and Khorramshahr fronts, sporadic exchanges of fire continued. While controlling enemy movements, the combatants of Islam destroyed an ammunition dump, a vehicle, two observation posts, and several slit trenches and foxholes of the Iraqi forces, and killed or wounded several Iraqi personnel. On the other southern fronts, the combatants of Islam continue defending their positions and sectors and are keeping enemy movements under control.

Yesterday, Abadan came under artillery fire by the Saddamist mercenaries; parts of the city's installations were damaged.

Yesterday, exchanges of artillery and heavy-weapons' fire continued on all the western fronts. While defending their positions, the combatants of Islam brought enemy artillery positions and units under fire, silencing enemy fire, and halting enemy engineering activities.

On the Marivan fronts, the mighty combatants of Islam brought enemy positions and fortifications in the (Khanumsheykhan) sector under artillery fire, inflicting losses and casualties, and preventing any enemy movements. They also silenced enemy fire.

Between 1410 and 1500 yesterday, Sar-e Pol-e Zahab came under Iraqi artillery and Katyush fire, which resulted in the destruction of three houses.

[Signed] The Joint Staff of the Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran

MONTAZERI BLAMES U.S. FOR PAKISTAN STRIFE

GF251832 Tehran IRNA in English 1700 GMT 25 Mar 83

[Text] Qom, March 25, IRNA -- Ayatollah Hoseyn 'Ali Montazeri said here yesterday that Washington has been trying to foment sectarian strife between the Shi'as and Sunnis in Pakistan with a view to creating internal agitation in that country. He said also that the United States seeks to find a firmer foothold in Pakistan by convincing that country that it needs more support from Washington in order to cope with the internal situation in that country.

The ayatollah who was talking to about 100 Pakistani students studying at the Faiziyeh theological school here Thurdsay, noted that the recent efforts of the United States for pitting Muslims against one another had been made in keeping with decisions made in a meeting of the Islamic Conference Organization in At-Ta'if Saudi Arabia last year.

He noted that earlier on, the Islamic Republic had been a principal target for sectarian agitation but that the United States was baffled in its plots by vigilant and discerning Muslims of Iran.

The ayatollah also addressed himself to the people in Pakistan and urged them not to fuel the fire of strife between their people or else the situation would only benefit the great satan (the United States).

He also urged the people in Pakistan to be suspicious of the operations of a group of imposter ulema who "are attached to Fahd's government" and who are commissioned to attack Shi'a schools, mosques and ulema in that country.

He expressed confidence that the people of Pakistan would long to live with dignity and without relying on the resources and "mercenery agents of the Saudis or on the U.S. (military) bases rather than blemish their Islamic honour."

PRIME MINISTER INTERVIEWED ON CABINET MEETING

LD271432 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1030 GMT 27 Mar 83

[Interview given by Iranian Prime Minister Musavi-Khamene'i following 27 March Cabinet meeting -- recorded]

[Excerpts] [Question] Mr Prime Minister, please tell us about the issues raised in today's meeting.

[Answer] In the name of God, the compassionate, the merciful. The meeting debated some political and [word indistinct] issues connected with the country. One of the issues raised was the recent earthquake. We also discussed a report on the pollution of the Persian Gulf waters, on which I will comment later. We then discussed the agenda. The significant remarks of imam of the ummah made for the New Year were one of the most important issues raised. We dealt with this in some detail. The meeting then heard a report on the government's economic and financial situation for last year and adopted certain decisions for the current year.

[Question] With regard to the question of the palace and slum dwellers and the support the government might accord the latter, could you please make some comments?

[Answer] A debate which the government began today and which is to be continued concerns the government's general plans for supporting the weak. The funds the government has allocated will primarily cover the remote and deprived regions. The government intends to see such funds directed for this purpose. The same thing applies to general incomes as well. However, the debate this year is to have the government ministries' main approach and plans directed, as their budgets allow, toward supporting the oppressed peoples. We also discussed how each ministry can exert greater efforts, within its capabilities.

We also discussed the government's plan to declare the current year as the year for protecting the oppressed people. Needless to say, the issue raised by the imam, that is, the tradition and nature of palace dwellers, was also raised in the Cabinet meeting as a rotten culture which might still exist in our society. An unremitting campaign must be waged to overcome this problem and to enable us to return to the clear spring water of our own Islamic culture. This is something which must be done at all social levels by all institutions and foundations. Naturally , the government must have a role in this.

[Question] Could you explain the matter of pollution in the Persian Gulf -- something you promised to explain further earlier?

[Answer] The pollution of the Persian Gulf waters -- something which is being discussed in the international media -- concerns the fact that Iraq has once again shown its ugly and anti-human face by striking the Nowruz oilfield, which is situated in the nor northernmost sector of the Persian Gulf and is close to the warfronts. This is something which can easily be done by anyone who has access to nearby guns, tanks, and rockets. Iraq did this without considering the pollution this can cause for the whole region. Since this happened, we have been experiencing some oil leaks. This chiefly threatens the coastal areas of the Emirates, Kuwait, and Bahrain. The interesting point is that these countries have so far failed to take any firm action against Iraq. This might be out of fear or something else.

Naturally, our country has taken certain measures in this regard. However, we have stopped work on harnessing the leak -- an obligation we have in accordance with the Kuwait convention -- because of the rockets Iraq is firing at these oil platforms. This situation will continue until the countries in the region provide adequate security guarantees for the Iraqi Ba'thist regime and until conditions are favourable for bringing these oil wells under control. What is important to us is that this matter has once again exposed the nature of the Ba'thist regime to the world, particularly to those countries which have been giving this regime so much support.

## MONTAZERI ADDRESSES VISITING PAKISTANI CLERGY

LD251647 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1030 GMT 24 Mar 83

[Text] More than 100 Pakistani seminarians and scholars attending Quom's religious seminary met and had talks with Grand Ayatollah Montazeri yesterday. According to a central news unit dispatch, the meeting took place at the initiative of the Pakistani clergymen to register their protest against recent incidents in Pakistan and the U.S. plot aimed at engineering clashes and sowing discord between the Shi'ites and Sunnites in that country.

During the meeting, Grand Ayatollah Montazeri, while expressing appreciation for their responsible attitude, said: It is regrettable that while the United States and the USSR -- through their agents -- are behaving in such a manner in various Muslim countries, that Muslims in various parts those countries -- through incitement of the arch-satan and his mysterious acolytes -- clash at one another's throats, thereby implementing the scheme of the foes of Islam.

Referring to the resolutions of the colonialist At-Ta'if conference, Grand Ayatollah Montazeri graciously said: At the end of that conference, it was decided at Kissinger's suggestion -- with the aim of halting the growth of the Islamic movement in various countries -- to fan the flames of internal squabbles, including the Shi'ite-Sunnite problem; and they decided to begin that plot in Iran. However, as a result of the growth of awareness of the brave Iranian nation -- whether Shi'ites or Sunnites -- and of the correct leadership provided by his holiness Imam Khomeyni -- may his lofty shadow be extended -- that plot was frustrated. The arch satan has now turned his attention to Pakistan. According to information we have, through a number of his agents and elements under his influence, the arch satan has persuaded the reactionary Arab regimes to pave the way for clashes and discord between the Shi'ite and Sunnite brethren through attacks on mosques and seminaries. We all know that such discord would not be to anyone's benefit except the United States.

Grand Ayatollah Montazeri also called on the Muslim nation of Pakistan -- as the Muslim nation of Iran, armed with awareness and religious-political growth -- to pay heed to their momentous situation and avoid fanning the instigations meted out by U.S. agents aimed at sowing discord. They should know that fanning such disputes would -- as graciously explained by the leader of the Islamic Revolution -- not serve anyone's interests except those of the demons and enemies of Islam. By raising issues under dispute among Muslims, they attempt to make Muslims miss the real enemy of Islam and the Koran in order to easily enslave Muslims, drive them out of their hearths and homes and turn them into refugees.

In conclusion, Grand Ayatollah Montazeri added: We are confidence that the great alert nation of Pakistan, has also recognized these plots, will frustrate them with awareness and will not give U.S. agents the chance to foment such disputes.

EARTHQUAKE REPORTED NORTH OF TEHRAN 25 MAR

GF251626 Tehran IRNA in English 1700 GMT 25 Mar 83

[Text] Tehran, March 25, IRNA -- An earthquake measuring 5 degrees on the richter scale rocked an area 80 kms north of Tehran Friday at 15:29 hours, according to the geophysics department of Tehran University. So far there have been no reports of casualties or damage as a result of the quake.

Casualty Figure

LD261242 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1030 GMT 26 Mar 83

[Excerpt] Interior Minister Nateq-Nuri, accompanied by minister of roads and transportation, Hadinezhad-Hoseyniyan, this morning inspected the earthquake-stricken area along the Haraz highway. In an interview with our correspondent, the interior minister said: In general it appears that there are fewer casualties than we previously imagined; so far only 21 people have been killed in 11 villages, 14 injured, and a number of people have been treated as outpatients. The minister of roads and transportation said: After the incident experts of this ministry have started efforts promptly to open the Haraz highway.

DAILY EXAMINES REASONS FOR TUDEH ARRESTS

GF280613 Tehran JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI in Persian 15 Mar 83 p 15

[From the "Reply to Your Political Questions" feature]

[Text] Question: Why were Kianuri and his friends arrested? What are the names of the people arrested? In which city and how were they arrested? Is it true that Ehsan Tabari has been arrested? Is the rumor that the arrested people were giving information about our forces in the fronts to an unknown information organization true? Doesn't the arrest of the members of the Tudeh party mean an end to the activities of groups and parties? What is the condition of these people right now? Is the Tudeh party legal or not?

Answer: There are three resons for the arrest of Kianuri and his colleagues:

1. A secret connection with the information and espionage organization of the Soviet Union called the KGB, in which confidential information was exchanged. This can certainly be called spying against the Islamic Republic system.

2. Forging passports for fleeing the country during an emergency.

3. Forging birth certificates for keeping their identities secret during an emergency.

The arrested people number more than 30, 7 of whom are the notable heads of the Tudeh party. Their names are as follows: Kianuri; 'Amu'i; Keymanesh; Shaltuki; Baqerzadeh; Zulqadr and Harzi.

Regarding how and where these people were arrested, the answer is that all of them were arrested in Tehran. They were arrested after reports were received and carefully studied and investigated. The rumors that all of them were arrested together at the same time and place is not true. The rumor about Ehsan Tabari's arrest is not true either.

Regarding whether the arrested people were giving information about our forces and our Army movements to the CIA, we should say: This accusation has not been confirmed yet. It is possible that we might find some evidence in the documents from the houses in which these people were arrested.

A dear reader asked whether this arrest means an end to the activities of the Tudeh party. We should say that these people were not arrested because they were members of the Tudeh party. If the Tudeh party, like other parties and groups, works in accordance with Communique No 10 of the prosecutor's office and the political parties bill which will soon be announced, and according to the regulations registers with the Ministry of State, then it can continue its activities freely. The accusation of spying does not apply to all the people arrested, only to some of them, and as we said, the rest of them were arrested for other reasons.

To answer the question about whether Mr Kianuri and his friends are being prosecuted at the moment, we should say that they are being questioned by officials.

In relation to the last question: With all these crimes committed by the heads of the Tudeh party, is this party legal in this country or not? The answer is that since the law on parties has not yet been passed, it is not clear whether the parties and groups are legal or not. So we have to wait for the law on parties.